

# VIRGINIA MAIN STREET



Building Economic Vitality Downtown

# Why is Downtown Important?

- ❑ Prominent center of employment
- ❑ Predominant image of the community
- ❑ Significant part of tax base
- ❑ Ideal location for independent businesses
- ❑ Historic core of the community
- ❑ Represents a huge public and private investment

# Stakeholders



- Business Owners
- Property Owners
- Local Government
- Residents
- Downtown Employees
- Utilities
- Financial Institutions
- Chamber of Commerce
- Historic Preservationists
- Service Organizations
- Arts & Cultural Institutions
- Local Media
- Youth & Schools
- Churches
- Surrounding Communities
- Visitor's Bureau

# What is Main Street?

- ❑ Method for reinvigorating the traditional downtown neighborhood
- ❑ Grassroots revitalization strategy
- ❑ Developed by:



**National Main Street  
Center**

a subsidiary of the  
**National Trust *for* Historic Preservation**

# What is Main Street?

Methodology Combining:

**Historic preservation**

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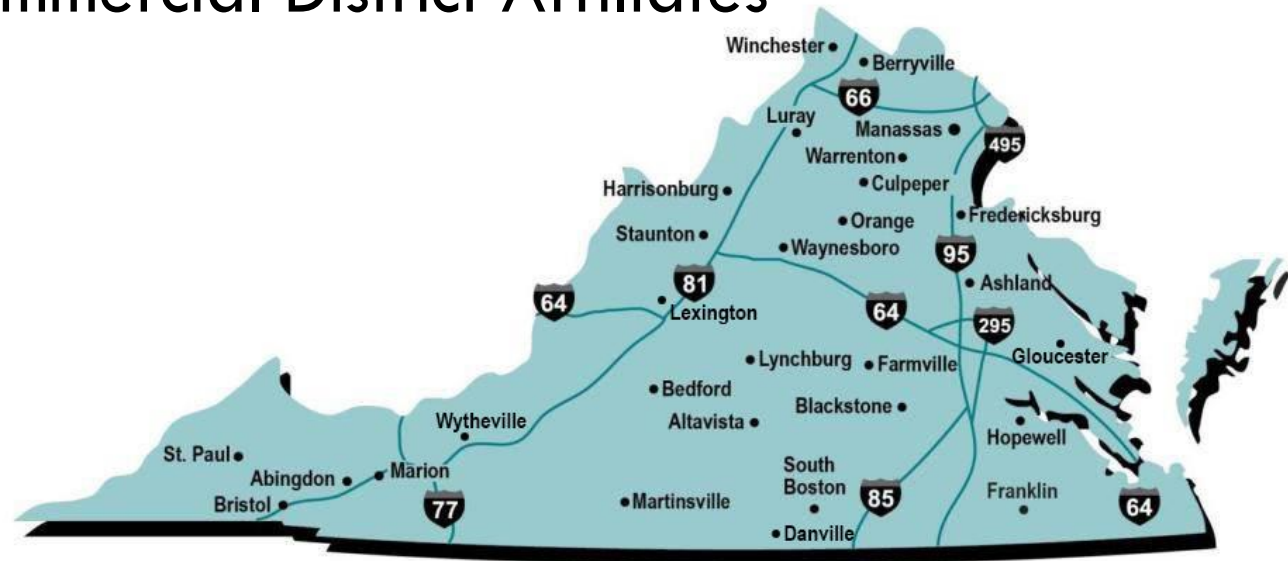
**Economic development**

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Restored Prosperity & Vitality Downtown

# Virginia Main Street

- A State Main Street Coordinating Program
- 29 Virginia Main Street Communities
  - St. Paul smallest at 1,000
  - Lynchburg largest at 75,000
- 60+ DHCD Commercial District Affiliates



# The Main Street Approach

Use downtown's traditional assets as a catalyst and basis for revitalization





# The Main Street Approach

Downtown's assets:

- Community
- Personal Service
- Cultural Heritage
- Rich Architecture





# The Four Points

Why  
MS  
Works

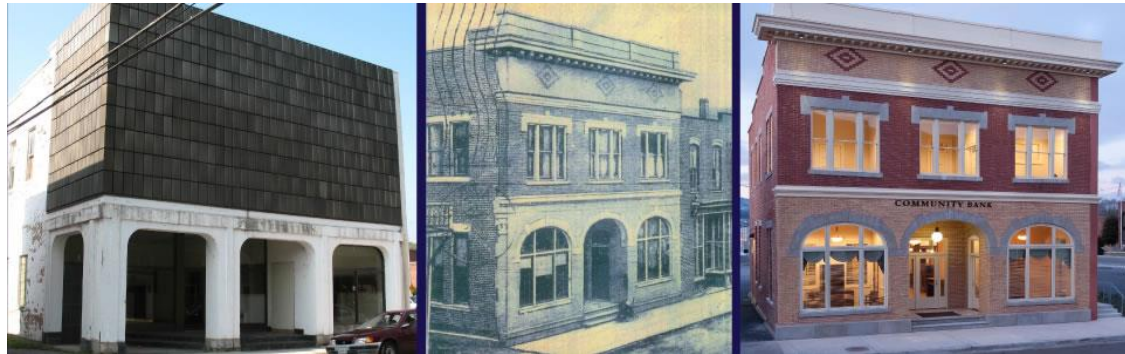
- Design
- Promotion
- Economic  
Vitality
- Organization



Make it Attractive!

Make it work for your community!

- ❑ Façade improvements
- ❑ Streetscape projects
- ❑ Rehab incentives
- ❑ Wayfinding
- ❑ Walking tours, education, etc.
- ❑ Traffic calming features



# Promotion

Bring Them Downtown Again!

**Drives Business**



# Promotion

- Image or Branding Development
- Craft a marketing plan
  - ▣ Identify current assets & market position
- Market-driven events
  - ▣ Business promotions
  - ▣ Special Building
  - ▣ Fundraising (with Org)





## Recruit & Assist Viable Businesses!





# Economic Vitality

- Strengthen Economic Base:
  - What role does your downtown play in the
    - National Economy
    - Regional Economy
    - Local Economy
- Focus on Entrepreneur development
- What Assets does your downtown/community offer?
  - Business development around your assets
- How can you accentuate your role with your assets?

- Promote program to stakeholders and the community
- Fundraising
- Manage volunteers
- Manage finances



# What Works

- ❑ Aggressive management
- ❑ An independent organization of stakeholders
- ❑ Comprehensive incremental approach using all the Four (interrelated) Points



# What Works – The Eight Principles

- 1) Comprehensive
- 2) Incremental
- 3) Public-private partnerships
- 4) Action-oriented
- 5) Builds on existing assets
- 6) Emphasizes quality
- 7) Changing attitudes
- 8) Self-help



# Outcomes of a Main Street Effort

- ❑ Entrepreneurship
- ❑ Pride
- ❑ Stronger public/private partnerships
- ❑ Vibrancy
- ❑ **“Sense of Place”**
- ❑ Allows citizens to be involved/have a say in what their community is like



# Economic Impacts

## Virginia Main Street 2016

- More than \$897 million of private investment since 1985
- Almost 6,000 new businesses and 19,000 new jobs
- More than 1 million volunteer hours invested since 1992
- Over 7,700 building projects



# Why isn't every downtown revitalized?

- ❑ Long-term process
- ❑ Hard work
- ❑ Previous attempts have failed
- ❑ Competing interests
- ❑ Old ideas, perceptions

The Good News is that the  
Main Street Approach can work  
despite these challenges

# Program Resources

- **Technical Assistance**
  - Design Assistance
  - Staff Assistance
  - Phone Consultation
- **Resource Material**
  - Web site
  - Virginia Main Street publications and research
  - Salary Survey
  - Statistics / Benchmarks
  - VMS Library
- **Training**
  - Training
  - Managers' Retreat
  - Scholarships
- **Public Relations**
  - Public Appearances at community events,
  - VMS Annual Report, Driving Tour, Annual Milestone Awards, Press Releases

# For more information

- VMS Website

- [www.dhcd.virginia.gov/MainStreet](http://www.dhcd.virginia.gov/MainStreet)

- VMS Blog

- <https://dhcdvms.wordpress.com/>

- National Main Street Center

- [www.mainstreet.org](http://www.mainstreet.org)

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